

Introduction

Land use mapping and the identification of potential land use have long been a practice in the Northern lands of North America. Only in recent years, however, have maps been produced for areas of Northern Canada. Increasingly, maps are being produced to reflect the values and aspirations of the communities, reflecting the values and aspirations of the communities. European cultural traditions of Canada are reflected in the land use aspirations of the indigenous populations of the north. However, through the 1970's as a reflection of their need to demonstrate acceptance of northern lands, native groups in various locations began recording and mapping the type, intensity and extent of traditional land-based activities in which they were involved. The objective of these exercises was the portrayal of historic and effective occupancy of land in order to establish or reinforce the legitimacy of land claims. Studies that typified this approach were the "Joint Land Use and Occupancy Study," the land use mapping of Inuit in Northern N. C. that formed the basis of Brady's "Maps and Stories" and the land-use and harvest maps compiled for the Cree of Northern Ontario by the University of Toronto.

In the Yukon the Council for Yukon Indians and the Federal Government have produced a "Joint Land Claims Agreement in Principle" for some 7,800 sq. miles of land surrounding Frank Duerden, and an agreement approaches the completion of the land claim. Throughout land claims negotiations it has been clear that apart from fulfilling an economic and social need

YUKON INDIAN LANDS
MAPPING PROJECT

BY

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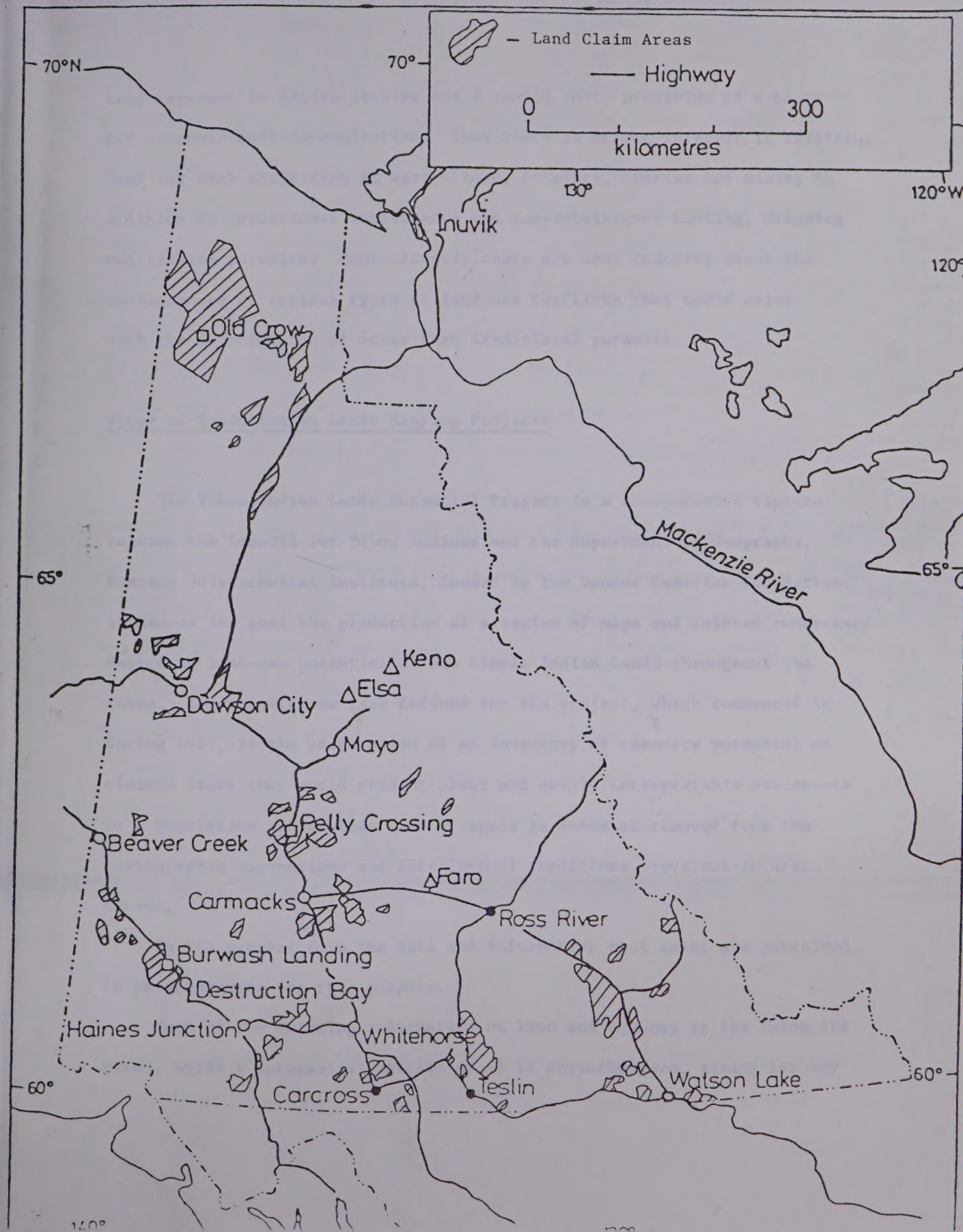
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Introduction

Land use mapping and the identification of potential land use has long been a practice in the more heavily populated areas of North America. Only in recent years, however, have land-use maps been produced for parts of Northern Canada. Inevitably many such maps have tended to be ethnocentric, reflecting the values and aspirations of the numerically dominant European cultural tradition of Canada as opposed to the land-use aspirations of the indigenous populations of the north. However, through the 1970's as a reflection of their need to demonstrate occupancy of northern lands, native groups in various locations began recording and mapping the type, intensity and extent of traditional land-based activities in which they were involved. The objective of these exercises was the portrayal of historic and effective occupancy of land in order to establish or reinforce the legitimacy of land claims. Studies that typified this approach were the "Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Study,"¹ the land-use mappings of Interior Northern B. C. that formed the basis of Brody's "Maps and Dreams"² and the land-use and harvest maps compiled for the Cree of Northern Ontario by the University of Toronto.

In the Yukon the Council for Yukon Indians and the Federal Government have produced a draft Land-Claims Agreement in Principle for some 7,800 sq. miles of land surrounding some twelve communities, and as settlement approaches the emphasis has shifted from the establishment of legitimacy of occupancy to questions of future land-use. Throughout land claims negotiations it has been clear that apart from fulfilling an emotive societal need

Figure 1: Land Claim Areas Investigated in Project



land returned to native peoples has a second role, provision of a basis for economic self-determination. Thus there is strong interest in utilizing land for such activities as agriculture, forestry, tourism and mining in addition to traditional subsistence and non-subsistence hunting, trapping and fishing pursuits. Concomitantly there are some concerns about the consequences of various types of land-use conflicts that could arise with the introduction of other than traditional pursuits.

Scope of Yukon Indian Lands Mapping Projects

The Yukon Indian Lands Potential Project is a co-operative venture between the Council for Yukon Indians and the Department of Geography, Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, funded by the Donner Canadian Foundation; it has as its goal the production of a series of maps and related commentary depicting land-use potential of Fee Simple Indian lands throughout the Yukon. Essentially the task defined for the project, which commenced in Spring 1982, is the preparation of an inventory of resource potential on claimed lands that would present clear and easily interpretable statements to a population group whose view of space is somewhat removed from the cartographic conventions and intellectual traditions prevalent in urban Canada.

In its present form the data and information that exist are perceived to be inadequate for this purpose.

Much of the existing information on land and economy in the Yukon are dated, while a substantial portion of it is unsynthesized, giving for any

region or particular activity only small glimpses of a much larger picture. The data are also spatially biased. Although there is an extensive amount of information for areas adjacent to major centers such as Dawson or Whitehorse in which there is considerable commercial and administrative interest there is a paucity of information for the widely dispersed rural land-claim areas. From the native standpoint data deficiencies are further compounded by the use of academic language--a reflection of the fact that traditionally data have been compiled by, and for, organizations in southern Canada whose intellectual traditions and spatial-economic perceptions and interests differ greatly from those of the Yukon's Indigenous population.

The major aims of the Atlas are i) the identification of potential land-uses, ii) identification of potential land-use conflicts, iii) identification of possible threats to the well-being of Indian lands from peripheral development. Apart from providing base-line information for incipient native enterprises the land-use information in the Atlas should enable Indian Bands to deal knowledgeably and effectively with public or private agencies introducing their own development proposals for Indian lands.

Six themes were identified, which exhaustively describe land-use potential and land-use problems in land claim areas; traditional land-based activities, agriculture, forestry, mining, tourism, and potential land-use conflicts--the latter theme resulting from a synthesis of the previous five.

Data Collection

It is evident from Fig. 1 that the size and distribution of the various land claim areas does not facilitate easy data collection, and the data

collection methodology (Fig. 2) is a combination of synthesis of existing data and new data generated by field work. The three components of data collection were:

- i) Synthesis and analysis of existing data on economic activity.
- ii) Field Work. This largely involved the identification and mapping of terrain units. There are sub-regions of land-claim areas, identified because of homogeneity of landscape features. The landscape inventory of these areas yielded information to add to or modify existing data.
- iii) Interviews with the Indian population of land claim areas.

i) Secondary Data

There is a considerable body of secondary data on land-use and the various types of land-use activity in the north. Such information includes Federal and Territorial Government reports, theses and academic research papers on the Yukon, data assembled by the CYI in the course of land claim negotiations, NTS maps (including the Environmental and Land Use Series) and air photographs.

In the context of the project secondary data is the starting point, providing information on past economic activity, the current status of activities identified for analysis, and constraints on economic activity. The data are utilized to provide base information for land-use potential maps, and as input into discussion of viability of various developments in the text.

ii) Field Work

Secondary data, in the form of air photographs or ERTS imagery is

also the starting point for sub-dividing the land-claim areas into biophysical terrain units. The terrain units, which are identified on the basis of internal consistency of vegetation and relief, are basic units in the study because i) renewable resource activity (forestry, agriculture, wildlife) are sensitive to, and clearly related to, variations in terrain and vegetation and ii) they represent environmentally consistent regions that are easily identifiable and which can be used for identifying impacts, or as a basis of land management.

Essentially field work serves to verify the data obtained via remote sensing and generate new data on current land-use patterns, agricultural potential and forest resources. Each Fee Simple has been traversed by a field team, and pertinent data recorded in field diaries and on 'Site Identification' forms. These forms are a check list of relief, vegetation, wildlife, occupancy, and environmental features which are recorded at specific locations in the course of a field traverse. The information collected in the field is used to modify or supplement data obtained from secondary sources.

iii) Interviews

Parallel to the field exercise interviews were conducted with Indian populations residing in, or adjacent to, land claim areas in order to obtain information on attitudes towards alternative land-uses. This survey allows the researchers to assess the acceptability of possible future land-uses as perceived by the affected populations and eventually to match aspirations with land-use potential.

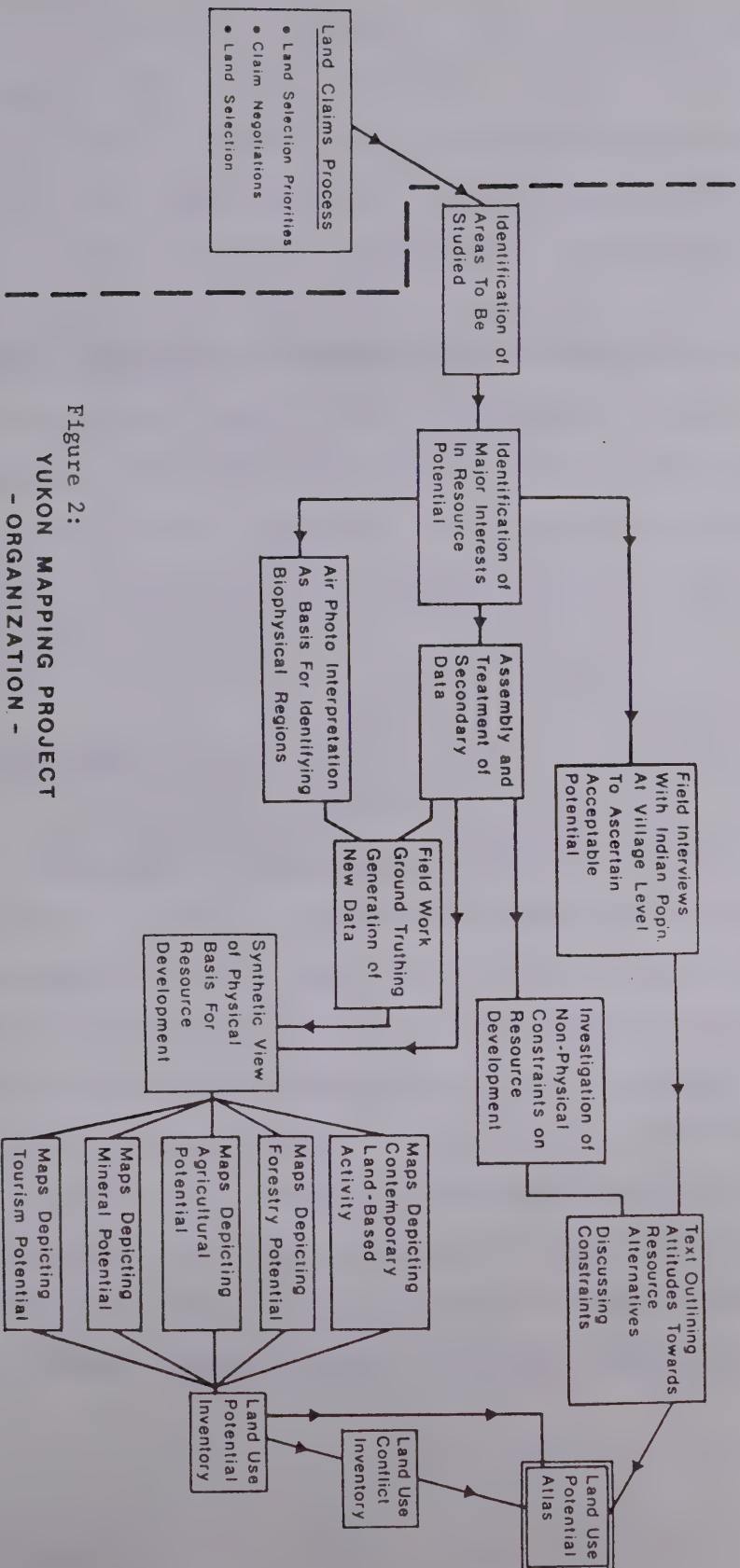


Figure 2:
YUKON MAPING PROJECT
- ORGANIZATION -

LAND CLAIMS
NEGOTIATIONS

LAND USE POTENTIAL MAPPING

The open-ended questionnaires were orally administered to each household by, or in conjunction with, a researcher from the population being surveyed. Response rates in 1982 and 1983 were remarkably high--in most communities above 70% of the Indian population, and in three of the eight communities surveyed sample sized approached 100%. Generally the surveys indicated internal consistency in terms of the aspirations of village populations, but there were marked inter-village variations in aspirations with the more isolated and dominantly Indian communities tending to stress continued reliance on traditional pursuits while those with a mixed population in more central locations identified more market oriented activities (tourism for example) as desirable future pursuits.

Atlas Format

The maps will depict land use potentials at scales ranging from 1:70,000 for forestry and traditional pursuits, to 1:250,000 for mineral potential, agriculture, and tourism. Maps alone, however, provide an essentially static view of economic potential; indeed it is arguable that they do not represent potential at all but rather depict the distribution of certain phenomena (forests, minerals, peoples, soils etc.) and that the recognition of potential depends on human appraisal, aspirations and initiative. Thus a text accompanying the maps discusses this dimension of resource development from the standpoint of Yukon's Indians as well as the more tangible factors--physical quality of a given resource, relative

local accessibility, location and quality of competition, and state of the national and international economics-- that influence the transition from recognition of resource potential to its realization. A second and equally important role of the text is to discuss the possible implications of the development of any one land-use on other land-uses. This discussion accompanies a matrix and related maps depicting potential land-use conflict, the matrix data being generated via a modified Leopold technique.

Some Preliminary Observations

Although there is at least one more field season before the project terminates some preliminary observations can be made from the data obtained so far. These relate to attitudes towards land, attitudes towards economic development, and the adequacy of land-claim areas to protect traditional economic interests.

i) Despite the sentiment that land be utilized for non-traditional as well as traditional pursuits the Indian view of land in the Yukon is not one that differentiates between land in terms of quality; not surprisingly the classification of land in this manner which is a product of the Western intellectual tradition is largely alien to the Yukon's Indigenous population. To them it is not a matter of seeking 'good land' as opposed to 'poor land'--all land is good.

ii) Not surprisingly the results from interview work indicate a strong relationship between community location and aspirations, and it is obvious that variations in aspirations have little to do with inter-

community variations in economic potential as identified from the standpoint of physical resource base. Those communities in which the Indian component is numerically the dominant component of the population (Pelly Crossing and Burwash Landing) stressed preservation of traditional land-use and way of life, despite obvious tourism potential in both communities and mining potential in the Burwash Landing area. In the older communities with a mixed population and a long history of commercial development, notably Dawson and Carcross the emphasis was on commercial-type activities, while in Haines Junction and Carmacks commercial development aspirations were balanced by a desire for maintenance of traditional pursuits.

iii) Attitudes towards future economic activity are split along generational lines. Older members of the Indian population desire substantial amounts of land to protect the traditional way of life for their children. On the other hand, younger members of the population tend to emphasize non-traditional economic activity as providing the basis for future prosperity.

iv) In many instances areas contained by land-claim boundaries are not large enough to protect adequate animal resources required for sustenance of traditional land based activities. Small land-claim areas may contain prime hunting territory (Summit Lake in the Pelly area is an example), but the area required to support the animals hunted in such a zone is much larger than that defined by the land-claim. It thus becomes imperative that a stringent view is taken of habitat preservation outside land-claim areas, the potential for environmental degradation and competition for animal resources being far higher here than in areas under Indian control.

Current Status of Project

Currently data have been assembled for eight of the twelve land-claim regions in the Yukon--Teslin, Carcross, Haines Junction and Burwash Landing were surveyed in the summer of 1982 and maps and commentary completed by February 1983. In the summer the 1983 field work was conducted around Carmacks, Pelly Crossing, Dawson City and Mayo Landing, and reports for these communities will be completed by March 1984. The remaining communities of Watson Lake, Ross River and Old Crow will be surveyed in the summer of 1984.

References

1. Freeman, Milton, ed. Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project: A Report, 3 Vols. Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services, 1976.
2. Brody, Hugh. Maps and Dreams, Douglas and McIntyre Ltd., Vancouver, British Columbia, 1981.

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